



## Early Journal Content on JSTOR, Free to Anyone in the World

This article is one of nearly 500,000 scholarly works digitized and made freely available to everyone in the world by JSTOR.

Known as the Early Journal Content, this set of works include research articles, news, letters, and other writings published in more than 200 of the oldest leading academic journals. The works date from the mid-seventeenth to the early twentieth centuries.

We encourage people to read and share the Early Journal Content openly and to tell others that this resource exists. People may post this content online or redistribute in any way for non-commercial purposes.

Read more about Early Journal Content at <http://about.jstor.org/participate-jstor/individuals/early-journal-content>.

JSTOR is a digital library of academic journals, books, and primary source objects. JSTOR helps people discover, use, and build upon a wide range of content through a powerful research and teaching platform, and preserves this content for future generations. JSTOR is part of ITHAKA, a not-for-profit organization that also includes Ithaka S+R and Portico. For more information about JSTOR, please contact [support@jstor.org](mailto:support@jstor.org).

# ART AND THE WAR

BY ALLEN TUCKER

---

I SAW the regiment go by, the first draft regiment, and it was a very moving sight, a very splendid sight: for there was the visible sign of the embattled Democracy, there was the evidence that what Democracy had lived for it was willing to die for. There was an American regiment, a regiment made up of all sorts and conditions, and in its strange entirety only American.

But it is not of the pride and satisfaction I had in the passing regiment that I wish to speak—rather of those of us who stood and watched. What about us? What are we to do? We who are too young or too old or too feeble to go—of what importance are we in the present violent scheme of things? And I wondered what was the important thing that we looked for in the passing regiment; and the thing we looked for and the thing I think was there, was quality.

Then, of course, I thought of art, for art is the supreme evidence of quality. Art is the one thing that is only quality. So it seemed to me that the duty of us at home was with all our power to stand for art, for beauty, for high quality. It is obvious that we must all of us render the direct service that is in us, the direct service toward helping win the war. It is of the *indirect* service that I am speaking, the service of our hearts and minds. It is we who must keep burning the sacred flame, as the Vestal Virgins cared for the fire upon the altar; and the reason I speak of art is that in this country the importance and the national need of art is but little understood.

Art is the evidence of the ideal in a nation. Without expression, nothing really exists. If we have not art, we as a nation cannot live, for art is the expression of the spirit and without the spirit nothing can continue. Art itself appears

or not, we cannot control that; but we can control our attitude toward it, and that attitude is the important thing for us to consider. If we do not lean toward—hope for—Beauty, we infallibly turn toward material things. A nation, like an individual, is always growing in one direction or another, and if it is not moving toward the things of the spirit, it is surely going the other way.

This war came upon humanity because of the effort of organized materialism to crush the noble things of this world.

Our country for years had plenty of business ability, but, lacking men of vision, it delayed its decision overlong in the midst of a world in flux. Roman civilization was acquisitive, collecting, not creating beauty; what has it left? Greek civilization was wonderfully creative, and the Western world still belongs to her. We are thankful to our collectors for giving us the necessary opportunity to see the work of the past, but it is our own art that is the important thing. We must express ourselves, we must create our own ideals. If it is by our attitude toward quality that our production will be helped or hindered, we should set the standard for our young men to follow. We have followed too long material ends, and we have been nearly blind to beauty, and now suddenly this war is precipitated upon the world by the beast in man, waged against everything in the world that is beautiful and sacred.

This war is fought for liberty, democracy, civilization, and these words only mean the right of man to live and express himself untrammelled—the “right to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness.” Let us be sure that we nourish and support the thing for which the regiment is going to fight; let us be faithful to our trust, as they will be to theirs; for be sure the regiment is a part of us—is, so to speak, only our arm stretched out, and what we think, what we are, the regiment will be the same. We cannot rest here intent on worldly things and have the regiment over there something entirely different. We must not sit here sodden; we must be moved—that is the important thing in the world, to be really moved.

Youth is the ability to be moved and to move others. Art is the permanent manifestation of youth, and is one of the greatest moving forces in the world. Art is youth, and the world will always respond to that “everlasting wonder song.”

A war to-day is a war of peoples; the army is but the cutting edge of a nation; the weight, the power, comes from the whole nation, and the people that is endowed with the most spirit, the most quality, will drive its cutting edge deepest and truest. If we do not understand art, the value of art, we cannot really develop our spirit; and it is only the spirit that is essential, the spirit that is life.

One dislikes to use the words "spirit" and "spiritual value," but one has no terms with which to express the real things, the only things worth while; that is why there is art, so that man may express the things that are otherwise unexpressible. Strangely enough, it is only the essential things that cannot be talked about—life, love, death: we cannot speak about them, except through the arts, unless we are reduced to gestures, even as a dog caresses the hand of its master. We cannot reach each other: we meet, we struggle, we live, we pass. We touch for a moment, and then again we are alone.

Art is the only means of continued contact that we have. Through art we achieve continued contact with the human soul.

Beauty is the godlike thing in man. In art he creates life. By any other means he only reproduces it; but in art he, like unto a god, creates life itself; and a nation must be sensitive to life if it is truly to continue. By art I mean the expression of the soul and heart, whether the form is in words or sound or line or mass or color. We must have reverence toward the necessity of art, trying to understand that art is the outward sign of the essential things, and that we must produce art if we are to be a nation fit to live.

The artists are like the regiment, a part of ourselves; as the regiment acts for us in our war on wrong, so the artists create for us beauty, make for us the ideals we live by and die for. If we stand for quality, for the high piercing world of beauty, we will help the production of art; if we stand for quantity, for size, for the outside of things, then art is not likely to come forth; and very soon, being without the visible expression, the ideal itself will decay and disappear, and we as a nation shall cease to exist.

Art is the ultimate expression of quality, but quality must be sought for, striven for in everything. We must realize that quantity is negligible—that it is quality that rules, and that it is the producers of quality, the poets and the saints, who

really make the world. If we do not take cognizance of art, we shall fail to apprehend those things that are all important, more important now than ever. For it is just those intangible things that will win this war.

It is our affair to make our armies feel that they are the active part of a nation aflame with the breath of beauty, burning with the spirit of liberty, blazing with the sureness of victory.

ALLEN TUCKER.